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Are you interested in becoming a European Spirometry Trainer?

Background and rationale

Following a survey conducted in 2008 by ERS on national spirometry training programmes and availability of training in 14 European countries, results confirmed the clear lack of training opportunities in many countries, with most training taking place on the job.

In an effort to address a clear lack of training [1] and studies within the literature confirming under-utilisation of spirometers [2] and misdiagnosis based on inaccurate results [3], an ERS educational Task Force was formed in 2008 as part of the HERMES project family. The primary aim of the project was to set educational standards for the training and certification of spirometry at a European level with the ultimate goal of improving patient care and quality of life for respiratory disease patients.

Three years on, the task force has successfully published a complete spirometry training programme and guidelines for certification [4, 5]. While preparations are being made for the next two project phases; 1) developing educational materials; and 2) assessment guidelines, the task force faces a new challenge. Project success is dependent on distribution of this initiative to a wide number of healthcare professionals across Europe and thus will demand a large number of skilled and qualified spirometry educators.

European spirometry trainers

To ensure the highest level of training and quality control, the involvement of the spirometry course directors and instructors are crucial. A successful approach considers not only the roles and responsibilities of the faculty, but also allows for a complete support structure utilising a number of important initiatives. Initiatives which are currently being developed by the task force include:

1. A set of training guidelines for certification;
2. Standardised educational materials for trainers, including presentations and other resources;
3. Assessment criteria, including an online knowledge test and guidelines for practical assessment;
4. A spirometry website with supporting educational tools for trainers and participants;
5. A spirometry train-the-trainer course programme which is mandatory for those wishing to become course directors.

This support structure will also serve to maintain the important link between the governing body and European spirometry trainers helping to realise the continuous needs of instructors and those hoping to be awarded the European Spirometry Driving Licence.

Statement of Interest
S. Mitchell is an employee of ERS

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The ERS Spirometry Task Force, from left: Herve Normand, Felip Burgos, Ole Pedersen, Flemming Madsen, Ellie Oostveen, Brendan Cooper (project chair), Jana Kivastik, Michele Dunne, Irene Steenbruggen (project chair), Julie Lloyd, Jörg Leuppi, Waldemar Tomalak, Sharon Mitchell (ERS Staff). Absent: Stephan Sorichter, Vito Brusasco, Matjaz Flezar.

The role of the spirometry trainer

As the primary aim of this project was to train health professionals to be competent in spirometry testing, the task force identified that an entire training process was necessary to achieve this objective. To reach competence, participants will be required to attend a one-day instruction course on knowledge and basic skills, as well as developing competence through a further one-day practical course and self-directed learning. Consequently, the task force produced an entire training process to help support this goal (fig. 1). Such a framework will ensure that those awarded the European Spirometry Driving Licence are competent to practice high-quality spirometry testing. Notably, it will be the role of the European spirometry trainers to educate a new generation of health professionals competent to practice high-quality spirometry tests.

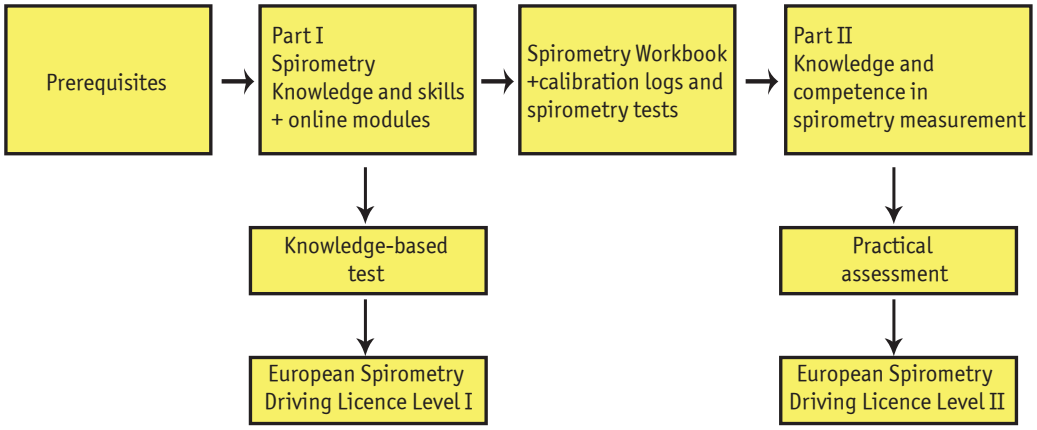
How can I become a European spirometry trainer for my country?

The first step to become a european spirometry trainer is to check whether your experience and skills closely match the ideal qualifications listed overleaf.

The next step will be to register for the HERMES Train-the-Trainer programme. The first training programme will take place as a Postgraduate Course during the 2012 ERS Annual Congress in Vienna, September 1 2012.

The training programme is designed to equip course directors with the knowledge, skills and necessary tools to deliver a complete spirometry training programme.

Figure 1. Spirometry HERMES training process



Conclusion

The foundation of the HERMES spirometry project is grounded in the evident and grave need to utilise education as a means to improve spirometry testing across Europe. While project deliverables offer a best practice guide in spirometry training, there is also now a real possibility of introducing to some countries, for the first time, a fundamental set of training and certification practices in spirometry.

Visit the ERS Congress website for more information on the ERS Spirometry Train-the-Trainer programme: www.erscongress2012.org

Course director qualifications should ideally include:

1. Certified degree in respiratory physiology or a related field;
2. Extensive experience in procedures and instrumentation for spirometry testing;
3. Experience in interpretation of spirometry;
4. It is mandatory that the programme director has attended the HERMES Train-the-Trainer Course;
5. Five years supervision of a pulmonary function (or extensive spirometry) service.

References

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